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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the seventy-third session

Observer status for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

Letter dated 6 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion of an item entitled "Observer status for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in the General Assembly" in the provisional agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

The application is supported by all member countries of ICES.

In its decision 49/426 of 9 December 1994, the General Assembly sets out the criteria for the granting of observer status in the Assembly, stressing that the granting of observer status in the Assembly should in the future be confined to States and to those intergovernmental organizations whose activities cover matters of interest to the Assembly.

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) is an intergovernmental organization that coordinates and promotes marine research on oceanography, the marine environment, marine ecosystems and on living marine resources from the Arctic Ocean through the North Atlantic. The adjacent sea areas include European seas, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, the North Pacific and the southern hemisphere.

ICES was established on 22 July 1902 in Copenhagen as the result of a growing concern during the late nineteenth century over the well-being of fish stocks in the North Sea, coupled with efforts by different groups of scientists in neighbouring countries to promote and encourage international scientific marine cooperation.

In 1964, through an agreed convention, ICES received a legal foundation and full international status. The full Convention text is available from http://ices.dk/explore-us/who-we-are/Documents/ICES_Convention_1964.pdf.

Members of the ICES community include all coastal States bordering the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea, with affiliate institutes in the southern hemisphere.

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Please recycle

ICES is a network of more than 5,000 scientists from almost 700 institutes, representing close to 60 countries, adding value to national research efforts.

ICES coordinates and promotes marine research on oceanography, the marine environment, marine ecosystems and living marine resources.

Scientists working through ICES develop knowledge to advance our understanding of the marine environment, identify opportunity and risk and respond to current management challenges, based on unbiased, non-political scientific evidence, as well as anticipate scientific needs for future management challenges.

Given the international character of marine research, and through strategic partnerships, the work of ICES is applicable on a global scale.

ICES is a staunch supporter of the United Nations and its activities. ICES has already established formal cooperation agreements with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

As an observer of the General Assembly, ICES will be ready to contribute and engage actively in relevant work of the United Nations. This includes achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to contributing to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, and the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects.

ICES and the United Nations have complementary goals and objectives. Greater participation of ICES in United Nations processes would be of mutual benefit.

ICES also offers capacity-building through its flexible training programme. The ICES training programme connects international expertise with identified knowledge and capacity needs, taking place at national marine science institutes and universities and delivering specialized training for scientists, policymakers and other stakeholders. ICES is further able to offer input, or contribute to major United Nations ocean sustainability programmes, as well as projects making use of its extensive network of experts and expert groups.

Science is the foundation on which successful environmental and integrated marine policies are built to achieve societally agreed objectives. Through observer status in the General Assembly, ICES may ensure its work continues to support internationally agreed policy goals and contributes to the implementation of these policy goals. Observer status will further make ICES capable of sharing over 100 years of experience of international science cooperation with the United Nations.

I have the honour to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Tore **Hattrem**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Norway

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

1. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea applies for observer status in the General Assembly

In its decision 49/426 of 9 December 1994, adopted without a vote, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Sixth Committee, and taking note of the oral report presented to the Sixth Committee on 25 November 1994 by the Chair of the Working Group on the question of criteria for the granting of observer status in the Assembly, decided that the granting of observer status in the Assembly should in future be confined to States and to those intergovernmental organizations whose activities cover matters of interest to the Assembly.

2. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea vision

It is the ICES vision to be an international scientific community that is relevant, responsive, sound and credible concerning marine ecosystems and their relation to humanity. The ICES mission is to advance the scientific capacity to give advice on human activities affecting, and affected by, marine ecosystems.

Scientists working through ICES develop knowledge, to advance our understanding of the marine environment, identify opportunities and risks and respond to current management challenges, based on unbiased, non-political scientific evidence, and anticipate scientific needs for future management challenges.

3. Membership and collaboration

ICES has 20 member countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. ICES is funded by annual contributions from member countries, as well as through advisory services and project work.

ICES also collaborates with affiliate institutes in Australia, Chile, New Zealand, Peru and South Africa.

ICES science and advisory processes are open to observers from a diverse range of stakeholders and interest groups. ICES also works through strategic cooperation with a wide range of organizations, including non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations.

4. Institution and structure

The ICES Council is the principal decision-making and policymaking body of ICES, consisting of a President and two delegates from each of the ICES 20 member countries.

ICES work is accomplished by various committees, expert groups and workshops.

5. Advantages of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea being granted observer status in the General Assembly

ICES shares and supports the goals of United Nations initiatives on sustainable development. ICES seeks observer status in the General Assembly to access and

follow the important global policy developments in the United Nations work on ocean sustainability, climate change and biodiversity, as well as conservation and management of resources. This is relevant to ICES work to promote and encourage research and investigations for the study of the sea, particularly those related to the living resources thereof, and their interrelation with a healthy marine ecosystem.

Science is the foundation on which successful environmental and integrated marine policies are built to achieve societally agreed objectives. Through observer status in the General Assembly, ICES may ensure that its work continues to support internationally agreed policy goals and contributes to the implementation of these policy goals.

ICES has already established formal cooperation agreements with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO and FAO.[1]

6. Advantages for the United Nations of granting observer status to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

The General Assembly would benefit from granting ICES observer status and thus gaining access to the ICES wealth of expertise and experience in scientific advice for policymaking and sustainable resource management.

The central focus of ICES for the coming years is to develop ecosystem understanding, in recognition of the need to develop the scientific basis for the ecosystem approach to management of the ocean. The ecosystem approach is a vital component required to achieve sustainable development goals as set out in 1992 at the Earth Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, and reaffirmed in 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as well as in 2017 at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

The work of ICES is able to support the goals of sustainable development through scientifically informed decisions; advancing the science needed for sustainable management; and sharing of best practices and/or lessons learned.

[1] http://ices.dk/explore-us/how-we-work/Pages/Scientific-cooperation.aspx.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer Status for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.